



Kentucky Department of Agriculture

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MARKETING MATTERS

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Variety of products fuels couple's success

By Bill Holleran

Rossneau and Loretta Ealom of Elkton love to grow vegetables and flowers. They also bake and can products they raise on the farm. They enjoy it so much that this year they are selling their products at three farmers' markets—Bowling Green, Hopkinsville, and the newly formed Dawson Springs market. The Ealoms are passionate about what they do and are great ambassadors for Kentucky's booming farmers' market industry—the kind of people that you really enjoy being around.

The Ealoms started out buying wholesale vegetables at the Fairview produce auction and then decided to try raising the products they sold. "We were fortunate to find help from Curt Judy, the Todd County extension agent, as well as Shane Bogle, who used to work at UK's research farm at Princeton," said Rossneau. "They helped us with a demonstration plot that increased our first year's 1,000 square feet of tomatoes to about one-half acre." They now raise an acre and a half of vegetables on black plastic with drip irrigation and have begun raising bedding plants along with the many canned goods and baked goods that Loretta makes in her kitchen.

Rossneau tends the garden, where he raises tomatoes, peppers, green beans, cucumbers, squash, zucchini, potatoes, onions, watermelons, and greens. Ms. Loretta raises flowers, bakes bread, and cans vegetables from the garden that they sell at the market. "We try to do a one-stop shop," said Rossneau, who believes selling a variety of products plays a big part in their success.

Another reason for the Ealoms' success is knowing their customers and educating themselves and their customers about new varieties and production techniques. "We attend as many workshops as possible and have been on several out-of-state bus tours with Kentucky State University. We also like interacting with our customers. They give you input about what to prepare, and we meet some real nice couples at the farmers' market," said Ms.



Loretta. By selling high-quality products and maintaining good customer relations, they have been able to expand the variety of products they offer for sale.

Ms. Loretta is certified to sell processed foods and baked goods at the market. Her specialties include sweet potato and zucchini breads, soup starter, and other canned vegetables. This year she purchased flower plugs to grow for hanging baskets that she hoped to sell for Mother's

Day gifts. There are also plans to add a 24x96 high-tunnel on the farm to give them more options to extend their production season next year.

The Ealoms offer several tips to new market growers. First, "Start small and try a few things out. Don't just jump in; learn about the products and how to grow them. Have a plan and work your plan. Don't assume you know; listen to what others have to say. You have to be committed and dedicated to do what we do," Rossneau Ealom said. The couple used the Internet, bus tours, conferences, and UK's Vegetable Grower's Guide (ID-36) to help them successfully grow and market their products.

Market Reports Available

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture has begun reporting wholesale produce auction prices for 2006. Auction markets include Bath County, Buffalo Trace, Fairview, and Lincoln Trail. To hear the reports, call toll-free 1-800-327-6568 and listen for options. Livestock, grain, and futures markets are also available there. For more information about KDA's horticulture marketing programs, go to www.kyagr.com and click "Plant Production" in the drop down menu.

Junior Livestock Expos Are Featured Attractions This Summer

By Jeff Zinner

The Kentucky Junior Livestock Expos are considered by many to be the best youth livestock shows in the state besides the Kentucky State Fair. The three expos will return in June and July to Morehead, Murray and Bowling Green.

Kentucky youth show beef, dairy, goats, sheep, and swine. They participate in additional educational activities about Kentucky's livestock industries such as livestock judging clinics and contests, fitting and grooming clinics and a skill-a-thon competition.

During the first day of the two-day event, judging clinics are conducted for each of the respective species. After the clinics are completed, participants compete in the livestock judging contest. Judging includes breeding and market classes of beef, goats, sheep, and swine. The dairy judging clinic and contest is held separately.

Members of 4-H and FFA also compete in the skill-a-thon contest, which tests their knowledge in breed identification, equipment ID, feed ID, industry questions, and carcass ID. Livestock calculations, meat judging, hay judging, and an EPD livestock placing class are included as part of the skill-a-thon. Al-

though adults cannot compete in the event, they can attend the livestock clinics to learn more about selection of breeding and market animals and to show support for their club or chapter. At the end of the day, a complimentary awards dinner for contestants, advisors, and parents is held.

The second day of the Kentucky Junior Livestock Expo consists of showmanship contests and shows for each livestock species. An overall champion and reserve show-person are selected in each species to compete in the round robin contest.

The Round Robin Showmanship Contest is considered the premier event as well as a fun and entertaining contest to watch and compete in. The winner receives a Montana Silversmith belt buckle and a cash award. At the KJLE-East and the KJLE-Western Rivers, Morehead State University and Murray State University will reward the round robin winner with paid tuition for one semester.

A supreme and reserve supreme champion will be selected for market steer, beef heifer, market lamb, market goat, market hog, and dairy female.

At the end of each expo the Commissioner's Award will be presented to an exhibitor in each species. This award is

based on points given for exhibitors' performances in showmanship, judging, skill-a-thon, and show placing. The winner of the Commissioner's Award in each species also receives a Montana Silversmith belt buckle and cash award.

The dates for the Kentucky Junior Livestock Expos are:

KJLE-East June 12-13
Derrickson Agricultural Complex,
Morehead

Western Rivers KJLE June 29-30
West Kentucky Expo Center, Murray

KJLE-West July 21-22
L.D. Brown Exposition Center,
Bowling Green

For additional information on any of the Kentucky Junior Livestock Expos, contact the Division of Show and Fair Promotion at (502) 564-4983 or visit the Department Web site, www.kyagr.com, for a complete list of rules and schedule of events.

Kentucky Foods Featured at 'Kentucky Crafted'

By Elizabeth Smith

Forty Kentucky Proud food companies exhibited their products to more than 9,000 people in the 2006 "Kentucky Crafted: The Market" March 3-5 in the South Wing B of the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture sponsored the Kentucky food section for the 12th year.

The 2006 Market showed a 19 percent increase in public attendance and a 16 percent increase in trade attendance over last year with a total attendance of 9,446.

This year's Market occurred Friday through Sunday, March 3-5. Only buyers of foods and crafts were invited to the wholesale day on Friday, while Saturday and Sunday hours were open to the general public. During these three days,

Kentucky Proud food companies displayed their products, offered food samples, and sold their wares.

For the first time, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture sponsored an all Kentucky Proud meal for the annual Market Awards Dinner on March 3, the first evening of the show. Food products from various Kentucky companies provided a delicious meal for approximately 250 attendees. Following the meal, awards were presented to retailers and exhibitors. The Kentucky Proud Best Booth Award went to Nancy Ward and company of Bluegrass Steaks and Everything Sauce. The Kentucky Proud Top Retailer Award was presented to the Liquor Barns of Lexington and Louisville.

Sign Up For Publications

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture wants to include your products in upcoming publications to help Kentucky food buyers find you.

These listings are **free** and will only require you to fill out **one short survey** to be included in all appropriate publications. Kentucky-produced meat, vegetables, value-added products, cheese, fruit and much more will be included.

Returning the survey will also put you on a mailing list for periodic newsletters that announce new opportunities, cost-share programs, conferences and more.

For more information contact Sara Williamson at (502) 564-4983 or sara.williamson@ky.gov.

Kentucky Joins Certified Landscape Technician (CLT) Ranks

For the first time Kentucky landscape contractors can take the Certified Landscape Technician (CLT) – maintenance exam Aug. 3 at the Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) campus in Richmond.

“We are very enthused about being able to offer certification in our state,” says Kentucky Nursery & Landscape Association (KNLA) executive director Betsie Taylor. “It has finally become a reality for us, thanks to a vision shared by our board members; by our two partners, EKU and the Kentucky Turfgrass Council (KTC), and by volunteers across the state. Approximately half our membership is comprised of landscape contractors, and we are proud to be able to offer them an opportunity to become certified.”

One volunteer who has been instrumental to the state’s certification effort is Roscoe Klausung, a Certified Landscape Professional (CLP) and president of the Klausung Group in Lexington. Since becoming a certified landscape professional in 2001, Klausung has been on a mission to have the CLT exam administered in his state.

“After taking the CLP exam, I real-

ized how important the certification process was for contractors like me, and I wanted to get something similar going at the production level,” Klausung explains. “Two of my employees have since become CLTs by taking the exam in neighboring states, but I wanted to give others the opportunity to take the exam closer to home.”

Klausung started lobbying at the state level for the CLT exam in 2001. He first presented his idea to KNLA and then he looked for partners who would pool their resources to help administer it. In his words, “one thing led to another.” Conversations with EKU put him in touch with a professor who was involved with the Kentucky Turfgrass Council. After more discussions, KNLA, EKU, and KTC came together last year to form the Kentucky CLT Partnership, a group that will sponsor this year’s exam.

The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) has since licensed Kentucky to administer the CLT exam. Contractors who take it this summer will be tested on core material and maintenance practices. Plans include adding installation and irrigation components in succeeding years.

“The implications for our state being able to administer the CLT exam run incredibly deep,” explains Klausung. “For starters, the communication that has occurred over the last couple of years has raised everyone’s awareness about the value of certification and becoming more involved with PLANET.

“Certainly, just being able to take the exam in our state gives more landscape contractors and their employees an opportunity to become certified, and that is good for them and the industry. Furthermore, as I look down the road, I can see our relationship with KTC extending certification to golf course employees interested in irrigation certification and even some members of the public sector.”

Klausung and Taylor anticipate having at least 40 candidates for their August CLT exam. Says Taylor, “At first, the thought of administering an exam of this magnitude in our state seemed overwhelming. Then, with the help of Roscoe and other volunteers, we found a way to get it done. Offering certification will be good for our industry, and it will add value to our members.”

-PLANET

New Marketing Staff Available to Assist You

Bobby LeCompt, Sara Williamson and Stephanie Wheeler have joined the Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s marketing staff.

Lecompt works in the Market News Branch. He brings a background in agriculture from Morehead State University, where he graduated and worked as a livestock technician. He completed the USDA livestock market reporting and livestock grading certification in February.

Williamson is a graduate of Murray State University and previously was employed by Neogen Corporation in Lexington. She works on the Restaurant Rewards and Farm-to-School programs as well as direct marketing fruits and vegetables.

Wheeler is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University and comes from the Cabinet for Economic Development, where she worked as an international trade specialist. She will serve as a trade advisor for KDA.

Lake Cumberland Milling Brings Opportunity

By Anna Kindrick

Lake Cumberland Milling LLC of Monticello paid local soybean growers 50 cents per bushel above market prices for 7,000 acres of soybeans in its first year. Now the Wayne County processing plant is looking for new markets for its soybean meal, soybean oil and soy hulls.

The company also plans to improve its production and marketing capacity this year. So far in 2006 it has processed 225 tons of soybeans to produce 180 tons of soybean meal, nine tons of soy hulls and 7,500 gallons of oil.

Soybean meal is a high-energy natural product that has 8 percent fat content and is sold as animal feed for chickens, hogs and cattle. Soybean oil is a food-grade unrefined oil that can be blended and made into biodiesel fuel or used for cooking products. Soy hulls are sold as raw material for cattle feed.



Lake Cumberland Milling was established in October 2003 by 27 local investors. They purchased the former Wayne County Feed Mill in December 2004. Henry Stringer is general manager of the plant, and J.D. Mullins is soybean manager.

For more information on Lake Cumberland Milling, contact Anna Kindrick at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture at anna.kindrick@ky.gov.

Pace Board hopes others will donate agricultural easements

Staff Report

Author Wendell Berry has witnessed what he called “ruinous” development of fertile Kentucky farmland. He and his wife, Tanya, decided to take action.

They donated an agricultural conservation easement on their 117-acre farm in Henry County last November to a Kentucky Department of Agriculture program dedicated to keeping farmland in agriculture. The Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) board hopes others will follow the Berrys’ lead.

Wendell Berry, a nationally known activist for environmental causes and sustainable agriculture, said he and his family donated the easement to preserve their farm beyond their lifetimes.

“One of our reasons for doing this is that we think the present rate of so-called development (130 acres a day in Kentucky) is ruinous,” Berry said in a written statement. “Another reason is our hope that our small place, which has meant the world to us, can survive us unspoiled.”

Conservation easement donations ensure that the land will remain available



Brent Frazier holds the new sign that will mark PACE protected farms

for agriculture and will not be converted to other uses in the future. The owners retain the right to farm the land as they always have and can sell the land at any time with the restrictions of the conservation easement.

Donating an agricultural conservation easement also has potential tax advantages, Berry pointed out. “A practical advantage may be that by our gift we have reduced the assessed value of our property by about a third,” he wrote.

Anyone interested in donating a con-

servation easement should consult with a tax professional.

The PACE program was established to purchase easements but also accepts donations. The program did not receive funding from the Kentucky General Assembly for the 2006-2008 fiscal biennium in the recently concluded legislative session.

“The PACE board is disappointed that funding for this valuable program was struck from the budget,” board Chair Frances Ann Brown said. “Federal grants are awarded on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis, so the lack of state funding will hamper our efforts to access federal money.”

PACE program coordinator Brent Frazier said the program still has funds available to cover administrative costs for services such as surveys and legal work associated with acquiring donations.

The PACE program has accepted donations of 27 easements totaling 3,815 acres.

To find out more about donating an agricultural conservation easement, contact Frazier at (502) 564-4696 or brent.frazier@ky.gov.

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